

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 MC-02 ACDA-05 EB-07 COME-00

TRSE-00 L-02 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 H-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

IGA-01 OMB-01 /083 W

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P R 191723Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8442

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 02548

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: ML, MILI, PBOR, UV

SUBJECT: MALI-UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE

REF: STATE 34927

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED ACTIVITIES OF UPPER VOLTAN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON WITH OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR MALI AND UPPER VOLTA AT FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE, GORDON BAKER, ON FEBRUARY 18. BAKER CHARACTERIZED UPPER VOLTAN AMBASSADOR'S CLAIM THAT BRITISH HAVE MADE "MODEST MILITARY COMMITMENT" TO OUAGADOUGOU AS COMPLETELY UNTRUE AND STRONGLY REAFFIRMED THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN UK POSITION AS DESCRIBED TO SANDBERG AND BISHOP ON FEBRUARY 3. UK VIEWED MALI-UPPER VOLTA CLASH AS AN AFRICAN PROBLEM IN WHICH FRANCE COULD BE INVOLVED AS EX-COLONIAL POWER RESPONSIBLE FOR DRAWING UP BOUNDARY AND ALSO AS TRADITIONAL ARMS SUPPLIER FOR UPPER VOLTA. UK DOES NOT REPEAT NOT WISH TO GET INVOLVED.

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2. BAKER SAID THAT AT THE BEGINNING OF JANUARY THE FIRST

AND LAST UPPER VOLTAN AMBASSADOR TO GREAT BRITAIN GERARD OUEDRAOGO HAD COME TO LONDON WITH A LETTER AND A MEMORANDUM FROM PRESIDENT LAMIZANA TO PRIME MINISTER HAROLD WILSON. THE DOCUMENTS BROUGHT BY OUEDRAOGO OUTLINED THE VOLTAN POSITION ON THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH MALI AND ALSO REQUESTED ARMS FROM GREAT BRITAIN. SUBSEQUENT TO OUEDRAOGO'S DEPARTURE FROM OUAGADOUGOU AND PRIOR TO HIS SCHEDULED MEETING WITH LORD GORNWY-ROBERTS, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE AT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE, OUEDRAOGO WAS INSTRUCTED BY HIS GOVERNMENT NOT TO PRESENT THE REQUEST FOR ARMS ASSISTANCE. OUEDRAOGO INFORMED THE FOREIGN OFFICE THAT THIS SECTION OF LAMIZANA'S LETTER AND MEMORANDUM SHOULD BE DISREGARDED. SUBSEQUENTLY, OUEDRAOGO MET WITH OFFICIALS AT THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT TO DISCUSS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BRITISH AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO UPPER VOLTA.

3. OUEDRAOGO ALSO MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HAWKER-SIDLEY AIRCRAFT COMPANY TO DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF A NEW HAWKER-SIDLEY 748 ALL-PURPOSE, JET-PROP AIRCRAFT. HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WANTED THE AIRCRAFT TO FLY VEGETABLES FROM UPPER VOLTA TO ABIDJAN FOR ONWARD SHIPMENT TO PARIS. ACCORDING TO BAKER, THE 748 IS A DUAL-PURPOSE AIRCRAFT THAT COULD BE USED EITHER FOR CIVILIAN OR MILITARY PURPOSES. HAWKER-SIDLEY WAS UNABLE TO SUPPLY A NEW 748 AND THE VOLTANS ARE NOW LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF BUYING A SECOND-HAND PLANE ON PURELY COMMERCIAL TERMS.

4. AFTER OUEDRAOGO'S DEPARTURE, THE BRITISH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE RECEIVED A REQUEST FROM AN ITALIAN FIRM FOR THE SALE OF ARMORED VEHICLES TO THE GOVERNMENT OF UPPER VOLTA. THE FOREIGN OFFICE ADVISED THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE THAT THE SALE OF THESE ARMORED VEHICLES WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. A BRITISH ARMS DEALER HAS ALSO REQUESTED AN EXPORT LICENSE FOR 140,000 POUNDS FOR THE SUPPLY OF M-1 RIFLES TO UPPER VOLTA. THIS REQUEST IS CURRENTLY UNDER STUDY BY HMG. ON A PURELY PERSONAL BASIS, BAKER SAID THAT HE WOULD BE AGAINST ANY ARMS SALES TO UPPER VOLTA BECAUSE THE BRI-

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TISH ARE NOT TRADITIONAL SUPPLIERS TO THAT COUNTRY, AND IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE BRITISH INTEREST TO INTENSIFY AN ARMS RACE BETWEEN UPPER VOLTA AND MALI.

5. BAKER REQUESTED HE BE KEPT INFORMED OF THE USG ATTITUDE TOWARD ARMS SALES TO UPPER VOLTA AND SAID THE FOREIGN OFFICE WAS INTERESTED IN A CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH THIS EMBASSY ON THIS SUBJECT.

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Message Attributes

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